

## FDA APPROVES DRUG FOR CANINE ARTHRITIS

### (RIMADYL)

The painful, crippling effects of arthritis hits animals as well as humans. That used to mean that the 8 million dogs in this country with osteoarthritis -- and their 5 million owners -- could hope for nothing but a diminished quality of life.

Recently, however, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared a new medication that relieves pain and inflammation in dogs and is safe for first-time treatment as well as long-term use.

Rimadyl (carprofen), an oral medication available only by veterinary prescription, restores dogs' freedom of movement to a dramatic degree.

Leslie Beeftink of Addison, Ill., saw her mastiff Ox change immediately once she started him on Rimadyl.

"Within 48 hours --he was up and happy and playing-- a new dog," she said. "He had no side effects while he was on the drug. He led a very comfortable, long life as a result. I am forever grateful for it. He was the love of my life."

Veterinarian Mike Paul of Walnut Creek, California, entered several dogs in the Rimadyl study.

"There is nothing in my clinical experience that's comparable to what Rimadyl has done for my patients," he said. "It's one of those drugs that I can tell people as I give it to them, "This is going to work."

Osteoarthritis is a progressive, degenerative condition affecting about 20 percent of all adult dogs. Characterized by pain, joint swelling and decreased activity, it's one of the most common causes of chronic pain in dogs.

Although dogs of any age, breed and size can develop arthritis, it is often seen in older, larger or overweight dogs; working or performing dogs; and those with inherited problems such as hip and elbow dysplasia.

No medication cures it, although surgery can correct underlying causes. The most common treatment combines diet and exercise with medication.

Manufactured by Pfizer Animal Health (Exton, PA.), Rimadyl is the first nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory drug of its class cleared by the FDA for use in arthritic dogs. During clinical trials, 81.3 percent of the dogs on Rimadyl experienced positive improvement; less than 4 percent suffered digestive upset or changes in behavior.

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Claudia was living a dog's life, not necessarily because she was a dog. Arthritis had turned the 11-year-old Siberian Husky into a lazy lump.

"She lay around a lot and had trouble walking," said her owner, Janet Ertel of Gallogway. After one week of treatment, Claudia began to turn into a new dog. "She was getting up easier," Ertel said. "My cleaning lady noticed that Claudia seemed peppier."

After three weeks of treatment, Claudia's rejuvenation was complete. She was romping through the house with Ertel's three other dogs --ages 2, 5 and 7.

RIMADYL....(continued).....

"It was like a miracle," Ertel said. "Claudia was acting three to four years younger."

The Husky's fountain of youth sprang from caplets of Rimadyl--two a day in her food. Ertel, 70, said Rimadyl has allowed her to revive...walking the dog.

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Mary Sue Humphries says, "My dog Merilla is on Rimadyl, and much more comfortable, thanks to Rimadyl! She's almost 12 years old.) [taken from Central Ohio DC newsletter]."

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#### FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE WITH RIMADYL FROM YOUR EDITOR, Nancy Turner

In late April of this year, I had a 8 year old bitch (standard) that refused to come out of her crate one morning. She was obviously in pain because she could not raise her head. I rushed her to my vet, who examined her, but I did not do x-rays because I have had this problem before and knew that it was a disc problem.

We started her on high doses of prednisolone and complete crate rest. She got worse and the next day we went in for our first Adequan shot. For three weeks it was up and down (more down than up) but we continued the weekly Adequan shots and I also increased her Vitamin C and started her on Cosequin. At four weeks she could move around pretty good but she knuckled over in the front right and rear feet. I had talked to quite a few breeder friends that had used Rimadyl and we started that after we had weaned off the pred. (this was hard, because every time I cut the pred. back, she would exhibit pain). After the first four days of Rimadyl, she was moving much better, after two weeks she was hardly knuckling over at all. To date she can run in the yard and is going up and down the ramp with no problem. She will always have a slight deficit, but she is pain free and happy.

I can't say this will work for all neck or back problems, but it's sure worth trying. My 13½ year old and 11½ year old will be put on Rimadyl as soon as needed, alot of my friends with older dogs have said they run around like puppies after being put on Rimadyl. Keep it in mind in case a problem arises.